

*May 27 / Administration of George Bush, 1992*

## Remarks at a Bush-Quayle Fundraising Dinner in Atlanta, Georgia *May 27, 1992*

Thank you all so very much. And Jim, thank you for sharing this highly successful dinner. I'm deeply appreciative. Thank you also for the introduction. May I thank Kathleen Bertram, who rendered the national anthem with such beauty and such feeling. Thank you very much. To Dr. Tomlinson, thank you, sir, for the invocation. A Congressman from here, but I believe from this particular district, Newt Gingrich, is up—the House is in session tonight, but Marianne, his wife, is with us. And I welcome her and pay my respects to our deputy leader up there, Newt Gingrich.

May I salute Bobby Holt, who is our national Bush-Quayle finance chairman, a fellow Texan, and he's done a superb job in getting us this far along the way. Also Fred Cooper, who is our Bush-Quayle State chairman, political chairman, and did a superb job working with so many of you in the primary. We had a fantastic turnout in a year that some were quite critical of, and I was very, very pleased for the result of that. And next to him, of course, a guy that deserves an awful lot of the credit for that, our State chairman, Alec Poitevint. He did a marvelous job. And he's doing a great job for the party. May I also thank Krishna Srinivasa for his wonderful work. He has energized, along with some of the other leaders here, the Indian-American community, great loyal Americans, and doing a superb job. And thank you very, very much.

Someone once described the people of Atlanta as "pressing forward, grasping the future, shaping something strong and good, and yet acknowledging and taking pride in heritage." Well, I believe that certainly does apply to Atlanta. But I also believe it applies to the American people. And I frankly think the American people are a little bit sick and tired of this 90 seconds of gloom and doom every night on the top of the television news.

Things are moving forward in this country. The economy is moving forward. The regrettable part is that a recent survey I saw said that 70 percent of the American

people don't understand that, don't believe that yet. But it is moving stronger. And the new feeling of confidence, the figures of confidence out today I think send a wonderful signal to all of America.

So we're beginning to see things changing after a long, dreary period of recession and economic gloom. And I think that's good because I think of our country as what I said a minute ago, something strong and good. We are not a declining America. And that's the message I'm going to be taking to the country this fall.

I might also add that we've got a lot to be grateful for in terms of international affairs. Look at what's happened in Eastern Europe. Look at the decline and fall, the collapse of international communism. Look at the fact that ancient enemies are talking to each other for the first time in history in the Middle East. Look to our south and see a hemisphere that is almost totally democratic. And look at these little kids and say they go to bed at night without the fear of nuclear war that their older brothers and their parents did. And that is something good and something we can be very, very grateful for as Americans.

And so I would say, tipping my hat to my predecessor and to other Presidents: Yes, we have changed the world. And we did it because people like the people of Georgia stood behind us in terms of a strong defense and recognizing that the national security of this country was absolutely essential. We've helped change the world, changed it dramatically, and now we're working to change America. That's what I wanted to talk to you about tonight.

We are working for free trade. I just came from a wonderful Christian school out here, private school, and they asked me the question about the free trade agreement. The kid read the question and said, "Well, my dad thinks that we're talking about sending jobs overseas or sending jobs to Mexico." I said, "Well, tell your dad he got it wrong." He's got it backwards. What we're trying to do is create more American

jobs through free trade and fair trade. That is the policy of this administration. And that is what Georgians understand because you have thousands of jobs that depend on American exports. We are not going to go protectionist in this country. I might say parenthetically, I want a successful conclusion to this NAFTA, this North American free trade agreement. I want a successful conclusion to the GATT round, the Uruguay round of GATT. And we're fighting to get both of those concluded, and that is in the interest of the American workers as well.

We're fighting for health care reform. I'm not talking about nationalized health care. I'm not talking about socialized medicine where the great quality of American health care is diminished because of Government interference. I am talking about a health care plan that, through changing the way insurance works, pooling of insurance, gives access to those who have no insurance at all and yet keeps the quality of American health care at the top of the heap. And that's exactly what our health care proposal will do. I believe it's going to work.

We're challenging the old thinkers in the United States Congress to help us, to the degree the Federal Government is involved, reform our education system. I think the time has come for parental choice in schools. It works at the college level, and it can work at the lower levels as well. Parental choice: Revolutionize American education, not by having some subcommittee in Washington mandate benefits but by literally keeping the Government out of the way and keeping control next to the American people, as close as possible. Our whole America 2000 education program is based on that concept, that local communities and families know better what to do about educating their kids than a bureaucracy in Washington, DC. And we need your help to get that one through the Congress.

I'm a little remiss; I might add this when I'm talking about education reform: You've got a great man running for the United States Senate in Paul Coverdell. You get him up there and six or seven more like him and give us control of that Senate, and these new ideas are going to get a chance. They are going to get tried.

I think the time has come for legal reform. We're suing each other too much and caring for each other too little. And we need to get some caps on some of these outrageous liability claims, malpractice claims. It is too much. The lawsuits are going out of sight. I want to see that changed, and I think we ought to get that done.

We did a little history, looking up for these remarks, and 200 years ago to this very day Jefferson put it this way, Thomas Jefferson: "The natural progress of things is for liberty to yield and government to gain ground." Two hundred years ago. And I'm now saying it is time to draw the line. And the philosophy that draws us together does exactly that. It keeps the empowerment with the people. It keeps choice with the people.

The need for change was brought tragically to focus in Los Angeles, in the Los Angeles crisis. And we moved in fast. I am very proud of the way the Federal bureaucracy moved on that one, with FEMA out there and SBA and all the loans and health and food. All these considerations were taken care of fast, including federalizing the National Guard and putting the 7th Army and some of the Marines out there to keep the peace. We cannot condone that kind of reckless, terroristic behavior, no matter how bad the conditions in any city in America. So we moved to restore order, and we now have a six-point plan for change, dramatic change.

Some of these critics, some of these liberal doctrinaire thinkers in Washington say, well, there's nothing new about these ideas. And I'll say they're all new because they haven't been tried by a Congress that has its head in the sand. Here's what we're talking about, our urban agenda:

"Weed and Seed," a brand new program to weed out the criminal elements and seed the communities with hope and opportunity and education.

The second one, enterprise zones. Everywhere I went in Los Angeles, people were saying, whatever walk of life, not just the business community but those that are working with the kids in the communities, enterprise zones is an idea whose time has

come. What we're talking about is changing the tax structure so businesses can take a chance and locate in these underprivileged areas, drawing jobs like a magnet to the inner city. We believe it ought to be tried. And we believe the best answer to poverty is a job with dignity in the private sector, not some Government program.

The third one—we've been working on it for a long time, rebuffed sometimes by Congress, but I'm determined to keep fighting for it—homeownership. Isn't it better to have housing managed by the tenants, and for people then to go on to own their own homes, than it is to grow up in some project with no dignity and no hope of grabbing that piece of the American dream which is represented by owning your own home? We are for homeownership, and we're going to keep fighting for that one.

The fourth one is welfare reform. And there's some cynics out there. Some of the great editorialists will say anytime I talk about welfare reform, I'm playing a race card. That is not true. The people that are hurt the worst, those that are impoverished the most, are some in our minority communities. And what we're trying to do is change it, to offer learning, to offer workfare as opposed to the indignity that comes with the status quo.

A little girl saved over \$1,000—her family being on welfare—and the system was so tough and so much of a penalty that they came along and tried to say that her mother could no longer get welfare because she'd managed to squirrel away a little over \$1,000 to save for her education. We've got to reform the welfare system so it encourages people to save money, it encourages families to stay together. And it isn't race. It is what is right and decent for America. And I'm going to keep fighting for that one.

The next one is Job Training 2000, a one-stop shopping program that I announced right here in Atlanta, Georgia. It's a good program for job training. It brings in all the areas of the Government that have something to do with it, and there are quite a few. One person that needs job training can go to this one outlet and get advantage of what's available in the field of job training. It's a good new program, and I think we have a good chance to get that fully

enacted.

And then the last one, which is a little longer range because it takes a while to get it implemented, is the program I mentioned in the beginning, America 2000, this revolutionary approach to how we educate our kids in the United States of America.

I've asked the Congress—when I came back from Los Angeles I said, look, can't we do this: Can't we lay partisanship aside; can't we just put it off the radar screen for long enough to enact these six programs or something like them? Can't we do it without having to make a statement and raise taxes, or go out and add to the Government spending that is already breaking the back of this country? And I'm hopeful still that the answer will be yes. I can't guarantee it, but I'm going to keep on fighting for these principles.

If you look to the core of these proposals, they are themes that all of us can agree on, no matter what side of the aisle you're on. Responsibility, opportunity, ownership, independence, dignity, empowerment. These aren't partisan values. These aren't liberal or conservative. These are plain, solid American values, and we have a duty to make them real for those who have not yet grasped the American dream.

We're not going to be able to spend our way out of these problems. We've tried that for too long. And we've got to remember these are not Government dollars. These are taxpayers' dollars. And when it comes to the deficit, horrendous as it is, let's remember who foots the bills, our children and our grandchildren. The time has now come to enact something that I've favored for a long, long time, and I am talking about a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

You're already having people tell you why it can't be done. And I am telling you it will work. Obviously, it has to be phased in. It will discipline the executive branch, but it will darn sure discipline the branch of Government that spends and appropriates every single dime, and that is the United States Congress. We have to do that.

And while we're talking about Government reform, another thing I'll be taking to the American people this fall is the case to

give me what 43 Governors have, the line-item veto. Let's see if we can't cut some of this pork out of the Federal budget.

We've got a lot of cynics that are saying, "You haven't tried to do anything about it." And I said, look, take a look at the budget that's up in Congress right now that puts a cap on the growth of mandatory spending. A President does not have control over the mandatory spending programs. They're already there, and they don't have to be changed each year. They just go right out of sight. I am suggesting that we put a cap, not cut them but put a cap on the growth of those spending programs, and that will reduce the deficit enormously. And we're going to fight for that principle, painful though it may be in certain quarters.

Now, so far I've talked to you about what Government can do. But Government are not going to solve the problems all by ourselves. It cannot get done. And you might ask yourself, well, what keeps a kid in school? What keeps a kid off the streets? What keeps a kid off of drugs? And it isn't the Government. It is the family. I am very concerned about the decline of the American family. And I am determined, through exhortation and sometimes through legislation, to find ways to strengthen, not weaken, the American family. We have to do it, and I believe we can.

Barbara Bush is right—not all the time, but she's right on this—[laughter]—when she says what happens in your house is more important than what happens in the White House. And the longer I am your President, the more convinced I am that that is a sound and solid message for all of the American people.

And we're going to try. We're going to try to strengthen family through welfare reform. We're going to try to get the fathers, the deadbeat fathers who run away and bear no responsibility to the mother left to raise the children, to do what they're supposed to do.

Let the cynics who want to design some mandated program out of Washington; we, Barbara and I, will continue to encourage to get parents to read to their children. There's a new report coming out tomorrow out of the Department of Education that's going to be a little worrisome to this coun-

try. It's going to show that we're simply not doing enough in terms of reading to these kids or requiring that the kids learn to read in schools. The kids are watching over 3 hours of television a day and reading less than five pages a day. That is wrong. And you can't legislate, but we've got to keep talking out and saying the way to do this and help these kids is to have strong family values. And one of them is that the parents ought to read to their kids and take an interest in them in the schools.

You'll notice I haven't mentioned my opponents tonight, not one of them. And I'm just getting warmed up on you, though, about the message because, you see, I believe that these values that I spelled out here tonight are sound. I believe the programs that I've talked about here tonight are new. And as I say, we have changed the world, and now we've got to bring this kind of change to the United States of America.

And I can't wait for the fray in the fall. As for now, I'm trying to run this country, and I'm trying to get things done for the American people. But lest you think I've lost the fire, I'm ready. I am ready to take this case to the American people. Let them keep punching out there for another 2 months. But after the convention, with you at my side, we are going to win this election, and we're going to win it going away. America is a rising Nation, not a declining Nation. Don't listen to the pessimists trying to get my job. They don't know what they're talking about.

God bless you all, and many, many thanks.

*Note: The President spoke at 7:18 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Stouffer Waverly Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Jim Edenfield, dinner chairman and Bush-Quayle '92 Georgia finance chairman; Edward Tomlinson, senior minister, Northside Methodist Church; Alec Poitevint II, Georgia Republican Party chairman; and Krishna Srinivasa, event cochairman and member of the board of governors of the Georgia Republican Foundation.*